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WHEN WILL THEY LEARN?

There are a few European intellectuals who still believe in the Soviet type of Marxism, but they are becoming fewer, particularly since the suppression of the Hungarian freedom revolt. Since the early thirties when intellectuals thought they saw in the Communist cause a cure for the world's evils, there has been a change and they have now come to see that Communism and its motherland, the Soviet Union—engenders greater evils than it eradicates.

The deliberate starving of millions in the Communist collectivization program, the bloody purges of the later thirties, and the deportation of whole peoples to distant lands caused honest thinkers to examine Communism more closely. What they saw made them speak the truth and they turned their backs on Communism. But there were many who refused to see the unwelcome truth. Their eyes were later opened by Khrushchev in his now famous admissions to the 20th Congress of the CPSU. He admitted the truth of Stalin's cruel program of murder and repression but erroneously blamed the man and not the system. This caused a new wave of disillusionment among Communist intellectuals and political leaders which led them to doubt the system itself, including even such a staunch Stalinist as Palmiro Togliatti.

But last November, Khrushchev made himself just as guilty of inhumanity as Stalin, when he initiated the Hungarian blood-bath, rivalling those of the blackest periods in the history of human oppression. Russian steel crushed a virtually unarmed Hungarian population whose crime against Communism was to want a government of their own choosing. The unbelievably sordid chronicle of the Soviet invasion need not be repeated here.

Once again these blind intellectuals have had their faith deeply shaken. In a sense, the plain people of Hungary became senséi to the supposedly superior European intellectual. They showed him that the satellites are not free and independent lands of socialism, but Soviet colonies maintained by sheer military force. Throughout Europe left-wing reaction ranged from anguished self-doubt to the cutting of all connection with the Communists. Of course, the preservation of the Communist system made the politically

hardened West European Party leaders propagate the Soviet line that the uprising was a "counter-revolutionary plot."

Numbers of influential intellectuals have broken with the Party. Others have chosen to fight within the Party against their hardened leaders. Numerous protest declarations appeared in leftist newspapers like the New Statesman and Nation, but the Party press is closed to such free speech.

A few examples of the disenchantment illustrate the general attitude. Along with other leading French intellectuals, Jean-Paul Sartre, the influential French writer who espoused Communism, renounced his allegiance unequivocally when he wrote in L'Espresso:

I condemn the Soviet aggression completely and without reservation. Without placing responsibility on the Russian people, I repeat that its present government has committed a crime.... I break regretfully, but completely, relations with my friends, the Soviet writers who do not--or cannot--denounce the massacres in Hungary.

Peter Fryer, former correspondent of the London Communist Daily Worker, turned to the free press to publish his account of the revolution, because the editors of his own newspaper refused to print his despatches without hiding the truth. His book, Hungarian Tragedy (Dobson Books, Ltd., London, 1956), is a condemnation of Communism and is bitter in its disillusionment.

In Italy, where Communism is strong, disenchantment was widespread. Party members and sympathizers protested violently against the Soviet "massacre" and resigned from the Party.

An outstanding statement of this disillusionment was voiced by Ernst Fischer, a member of the Austrian Communist Party Central Committee: "At no time has any other event hurt us so deeply, nor has any event shaken our conscience so painfully as the Hungarian tragedy."

It is difficult to measure what appeal Communism still has for these "captive" intellectuals of Western Europe. There is little doubt that Soviet Communism has suffered a

severe, perhaps irreparable blow. The intellectual turmoil has prompted a clutching for alternatives like "national" Communism, or "one's own road to Socialism," as Japanese Comrades like to call it. It seems inconceivable that the remaining deluded intellectuals one day will not see the essential truth that the practice of Communism in any of its forms has invariably resulted in brutal oppression, obliterating political and intellectual freedom. All this is done in the name of Marxist-Leninist pseudo-science, which is built on a false premise concerning the validity of supra-human, materialistic laws of History. Until the remaining intellectuals in Europe and the Far East turn their critical faculties to examining the fallacies of Marxist theory and practice, they invite for themselves and their peoples, intellectual or physical annihilation, whether under Soviet, Maoist or Titoist Communism.